

CHAPTER 5

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR PARK MANAGERS AND STAFFERS

GS 09 - GS 15

5-1. Career Development Plan for Park Managers and Staffers. Park managers and staffers are discussed within this section and their pathways are incorporated into the same diagram (see Figure 5-1) because of the similarities of the two groups. The positions occupied by the members of these two groups comprise the key management and leadership positions (at project, district, division, and headquarters) of the natural resources management element of the Corps.

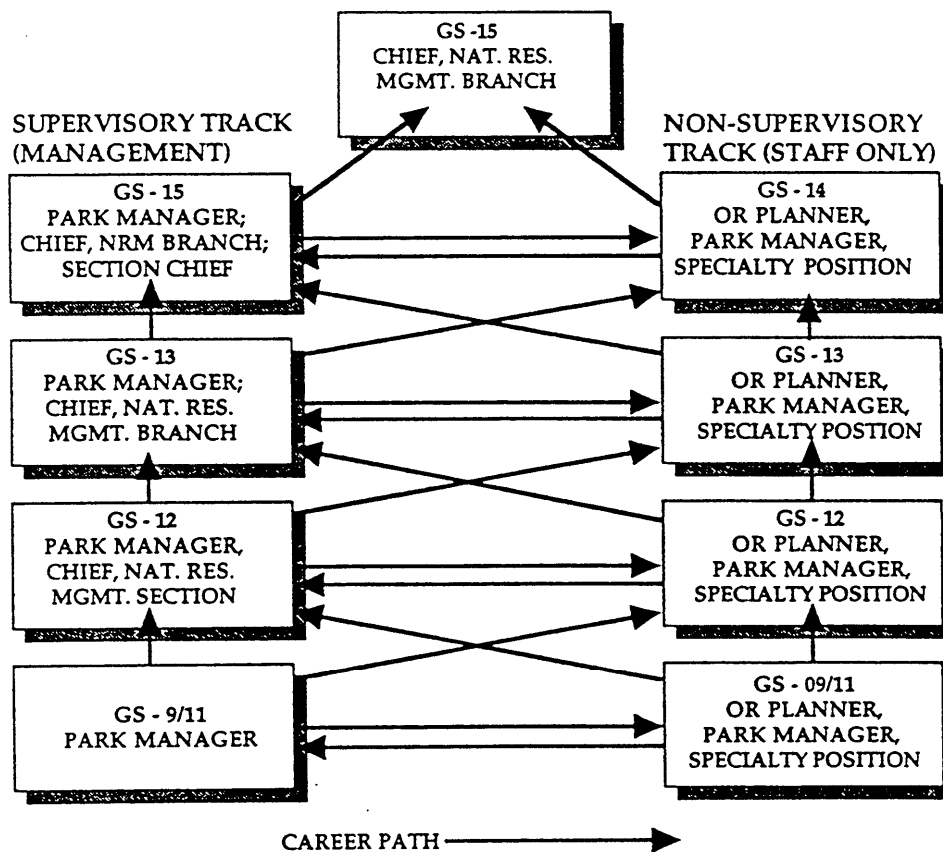


FIGURE 5-1. CAREER DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR PARK MANAGERS AND STAFFERS

5-2. Description of Duties - Park Manager, GS-0025/09 - 14 (Field Projects). This series includes team members who supervise and manage work that involves the stewardship of Federal lands, waters, and park resources at Corps operated and maintained water resources development projects. Park managers provide key leadership and supervision and are responsible for the preparation of budgets, human resources administration, and the following major program areas: park management, natural resources management, historic and cultural resource management, real property and shoreline management, environmental compliance practices and audits, visitor assistance, dam operation and maintenance, the development of interpretive and recreational programs for the benefit of the public, contract management, and safety. Positions are graded from GS 09 through GS 14. Park managers of average- or large-sized projects are typically graded at the GS 12 or GS 13 level. Assistant park manager positions are included within this category and characteristically graded at GS 11 or GS 12. Supervisory duties and leadership responsibilities are critical components of all these positions.

5-3. Description of Duties - District, Division, and Headquarters Staff; GS-0025, GS-0023, GS-0401/09 - 15. Staff positions are located in district, division, and headquarters offices and commonly include a variety of series such as GS-0025 (Park Manager), GS-0023 (Outdoor Recreation Planner), and GS-0401 (Biologist). Positions may include supervisory and administrative responsibilities in addition to managerial and technical duties depending upon local conditions. District natural resources management chiefs commonly are responsible for the technical and administrative supervision of park managers at all field projects within the geographic boundaries of the district. Additionally, they supervise their own office staff as well as provide staff support to the operations division chief and the district commander. District natural resources management chiefs serve as the technical authorities on natural resources management issues in their respective districts. They provide, and are responsible for, providing long-range resource planning, program direction, coordination, and evaluation of natural resources management programs and related activities of district water resource development projects. In contrast to the park manager in the field, the district natural resources management chief is less involved with day-to-day work being done at the project and more concerned with the scope and direction of the entire district program.

Branch and Section Chiefs – Branch and section chiefs in the division offices and headquarters provide administrative and technical supervision to their staffs and may have direct supervisory control over district or field staffs. Section chiefs in headquarters are typically work leaders for one to three professionals. Division and headquarters natural resources management chiefs, like their district counterparts, are the recognized technical experts in the area of natural resources management in their respective organizations. At the division and headquarters levels more emphasis is placed upon long-range planning, budget review, the approval of long-range plans such as master plans and operational management plans, policy development, and

coordination of the overall program than at the district. Less emphasis is placed upon the tracking of day-to-day work in the field at these levels than at the district. Division and headquarters chiefs and their staffs also provide an important consultation function to the districts and field managers. Problems of a regional or a highly controversial nature are often resolved by these individuals.

Non-Supervisory District, Division, and Headquarters Staff- The remainder of those individuals in the district, division, and headquarters offices who are not chiefs, assistants, or work leaders are known as staffers. There are considerable similarities in the duties of individuals occupying these types of positions, regardless of where they are located. Individuals in these positions typically have staff responsibility for certain functional program areas such as environmental compliance, forest and wildlife management, water safety, interpretation, visitor assistance, etc. They are recognized technical experts in their respective program areas and are responsible for managing those programs. Management activities include oversight and inspection of field operations, interpretation and implementation of policy guidelines, provision of consultation services, preparation and coordination of correspondence and reports, coordination and review of plans and work plans, etc. Work emphasis shifts toward policy development and coordination and away from day-to-day field implementation when moving from the district to the division and headquarters. Non-supervisory positions comprising this staff group are typically graded from the GS 09 to GS 14 levels. Most individuals in these positions have completed the park ranger training program and/or have worked at field projects during the earlier portions of their careers.

5-4. Educational Requirements Park managers and staffers perform complex professional and scientific work and are frequently involved in controversial issues. They are responsible for the development, management, conservation, and protection of Federal lands and waters where recreation activities and land management inherently impact the ecosystem. The major focus of positions within this career development plan is the integration of natural resources and recreation management. Knowledge and skills required often transcend several existing professional series requirements. Most park managers and staffers have completed a full four-year course of study at an accredited college or university with a bachelors or higher degree that includes at least 30 semester hours of course work in natural resources and/or recreation management.

5-5. Formal Classroom Training Individuals who become Corps park managers and staffers within the natural resources management element come to the job with a variety of educational backgrounds and skills. Most have received a wide variety of training and job experiences earlier in their careers that provide them with a large

set of common experience, skills, and knowledge. Virtually all park managers and most staffers have completed a park ranger training program and/or have worked at field projects in park ranger or specialist positions. Classroom training commonly taken during that stage of a career is outlined in Table 4-2 of the Park Ranger and Natural Resources Management Specialist section. Task emphasis for park managers and staffers shifts from the application of scientific management principles on the ground (i.e., preparation of technical forest and wildlife management prescriptions), that is characteristic of the park ranger or specialist, to program management, long-range planning, human resources management, administration, and policy development. Table 5-1 lists formal classroom courses that should be obtained by the park managers and staffers at various grade levels. These additional courses build upon the foundation discussed above and outlined in Tables 3-1 and 4-2. The objective of this approach is to promote individual growth and develop a cadre of well-rounded leaders highly qualified for key natural resources management and ACTEDS leadership positions.

5-6. Technical Courses (Classroom and Correspondence). Technical short courses and correspondence courses are provided to meet the specific needs of park managers and staffers as dictated by specific job circumstances. A number of these are listed in Table 4-3 of the Park Ranger and Natural Resources Management Specialist section that are appropriate for the park managers and staffers. Some staffers, particularly those in district offices, require a considerable quantity of highly technical scientific course work in subject areas such as environmental compliance, forestry, wildlife management, technical writing, computer data base management, etc. All members of the park manager and staffer groups are encouraged to take short courses in areas such as technical writing, public involvement, budgeting, briefing skills, human resources management, policy, environmental compliance, and administration. The Department of Defense and other Federal agencies offer correspondence courses that meet a variety of needs. No additional specific course titles are suggested here. Such course selections should be made during the development of the individual development plan.

5-7. Developmental Assignments. Developmental assignments provide opportunities for park managers and staffers to obtain additional experience and improve skills. By working in different offices, and at all organizational levels of the Corps, individuals can gain a more complete understanding of natural resources management, a more thorough knowledge of all aspects of natural resources management policy, and a working understanding of how the various levels of the natural resources management element interact. These types of experiences are also designed to prepare individuals for positions of additional leadership and increasing responsibility as well as to improve performance in current positions. Field office and higher headquarters office assignments are listed in Table 5-2. These developmental assignments, again, build upon the assignments listed in Table 4-4 of the Park Ranger and Natural Resources Management Specialist section. Participation in a range of developmental assignments is critical in qualifying for key ACTEDS positions.

TABLE 5-1. FORMAL COURSES FOR PARK MANAGERS AND STAFFERS

GRADE	(REQUIREMENT) COURSE DESCRIPTION	SOURCE
GS 9/11	(M) Leadership Education and Development (1)	CAL
	(M) O&M Contracts Advanced	Huntsville
	(HR) Supervisor Development Course	DA
	(HR) Instructional Methods (2)	Huntsville
	(HR) Public Awareness - Conflict Resolution	Varies
	(HR) Visitor Assistance (Update)	Huntsville
	(R) Human Resources Management I &II	Huntsville
	(R) Supervision and Group Performance	Varies
GS 12/13	(HR) Personnel Management for Executives	OPM
	(HR) Organizational Leadership for Executives	CAL
	(HR) Budget Training	Varies
	(HR) Seminar in Natural Resources Management	Varies
	(R) Human Resources Management III & IV	Huntsville
GS 14/15	(HR) OPM Management Development Seminars	OPM

(M) Mandatory

(HR) Highly Recommended

(R) Recommended

(1) Mandatory for Supervisors

(2) Correspondence course provided by Army Institute for Professional Development

DA - Department of the Army Institute for Professional Development

CAL - Center for Army Leadership, Training and Doctrine Command

Huntsville - Huntsville Training Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Varies - Offered by the Office of Personnel Management, Universities, local vendors, Corps District or Division sponsored, etc.

5-8. On-The-Job Training Experience. Many park managers and staffers, whether at the project, district, division, or headquarters, have occupied a number of positions during their careers that have assisted professional development. The developmental and rotational assignments discussed in the preceding section provide a wide range of on-the-job training experience. This experience builds on those gained during programs such as the Park Ranger Training Program. No additional on-the-job training experience is suggested beyond that provided in the preceding section (see Table 4-5). Team members who have transferred to the Corps

from other agencies and lack the range of experience outlined in Tables 4-4/5 should participate in appropriate developmental assignments as soon as practical.

TABLE 5-2. DEVELOPMENTAL ASSIGNMENTS FOR PARK MANAGERS AND STAFFERS

GRADE	LOCATION	TYPE AND DURATION OF ASSIGNMENT
GS 11-12	District	(HR) Minimum one-month rotational assignment in district natural resources office for field managers
GS 11-15	Field	(HR) Minimum one-month field assignment for district, division, and HQUSACE staff with no previous or recent Corps field experience
GS 11	District	(R) Minimum two-week rotational assignment within district planning office
GS 11	DoD Facility	(R) Minimum one-week assignment at facilities engineering (natural resources office)
GS 11-15	Dist/Div/HQ	(R) Minimum one-month rotational assignment within operations (i.e. navigation, regulatory, hydropower, etc.)
GS 11-14	HQUSACE	(HR) Minimum two-month assignment in HQUSACE
GS 12-14	Div/HQ	(HR) Assignment on committee or task force at the HQUSACE or division level
GS 12-15	Dist/Div/HQ	(R) Minimum two-month assignment to another element

5-9. Career Advancement Paths. Figure 5-1, displayed earlier in this chapter, illustrates that Corps park managers and staffers have a wide range of career options that are reflected in a number of grade levels and a wide range of position titles and descriptions. Corps staffers are stationed at districts, divisions, and at headquarters while park managers are located at field projects, areas, districts, and division offices. However, the bulk of all park managers are located at field projects. The commonality between all of these positions is that they involve key leadership and administrative roles. Park managers (project offices), branch chiefs, and section chiefs have the added duties of supervision and human resources management. The matrix in Figure 5-1 illustrates the large number of options within this part of

the natural resources management career path that are available to the career team member. The number of positions graded at the GS 14 level and above is, however, very small. Movement through this part of the career path by specific pathways requires that the individual team member make a series of decisions at various times during one's career, including changes in duty station. The early development of a formal career plan with specific objectives is highly recommended. Career development plans are particularly crucial if one aspires to key ACTEDS leadership positions.